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Tip^{of} the Week

Plan a debt management session as part of your orientation activities for your next group of incoming students. Call TG at (800) 338-4752 for ideas, handouts, and other resources.

TG updates

TG to present free FAFSA videoconference: *The FAFSA Made Easy*

While we know that the FAFSA is the single most important document needed to receive financial aid, recent statistics from the American Council on Education state that 50 percent of all undergraduate students in the 1999-2000 academic year did not fill out a FAFSA.

To help your students and their parents complete the FAFSA accurately and in a timely manner, TG will broadcast its 10th annual FAFSA videoconference on Thursday, February 3, 2005, from 7 p.m. till 8 p.m. CST. *The FAFSA Made Easy*, is a free broadcast that provides parents and students with instructions for completing the FAFSA. TG also produces a companion FAFSA show in Spanish. TG will distribute the Spanish version of the program, *La FAFSA Simplificada*, to coincide with the broadcast of the English program.

To host the broadcast, all you need to provide is a room with a television, and a VCR or satellite reception.

TG also will provide your institution with financial aid awareness materials, including posters, flyers, fact sheets, and a checklist of items needed to complete the FAFSA.

As a bonus, TG is giving away several \$500 scholarships to high school seniors who view the program at host sites. The returned student evaluation forms included in the financial aid awareness materials will serve as the scholarship entry forms.

To register as a host site, please complete the registration form available at <http://www.adventuresineducation.org/Events/Videoconference2005/>. For more information, please contact Richard Sapp at (800) 252-9743, ext. 2865 or by e-mail at richard.sapp@tgsdc.org.

Enhanced functionality with CommonLine 5

As part of our commitment to provide you with the flexibility to simplify your loan management needs, TG supports both versions of CommonLine (CL) – CommonLine 4 (CL4) and CommonLine 5 (CL5). CL has been around for nearly a decade, and is well-known within the financial aid community. Whether you are submitting an application for guarantee, disbursing a loan, or returning funds via change transactions, all of these actions are processed behind the scenes via CL.

Those unfamiliar with CL5 may have some questions about the benefits that it provides beyond those offered in CL4. If you are a CL4 user, here are some features of CL5 that you might want to consider.

Use of School Non-ED Branch ID field

New for the CL5 application process is the School Non-ED Branch ID field that can be submitted with an application. CL4 only supports a Lender Non-ED Branch ID. In CL5, however, there is an additional Non-ED Branch ID for schools. This field is a self-assigned ID that schools may use for internal routing purposes. For example, a community college that has many satellite campuses but only one ED ID can assign a Non-ED Branch ID to each of its satellite campuses. It can then submit that ID in all applications for each campus, and use it to route guarantee responses or disbursements, or for other unique identification purposes.

Disbursement Rosters in CL5 also support the School Non-ED Branch ID. CL5 rosters also include more detailed information about the loan, including the status of the promissory note, a hold/release indicator, and two fees paid fields – one for Origination Fees Paid and another for Guarantee Fees Paid.

Ability to submit borrower address and phone number changes

With CL5 change transactions, you have the added ability to submit borrower address and phone number changes as well as report school refund information at the disbursement level. CL4 is limited to loan-level reporting of refunds.

Expanded response functionality

Another benefit of CL5 change transactions is the ability to include expanded responses. CL5 allows service providers to include several new status codes that tell a school when a change transaction has been forwarded to another institution for approval, or is pending further review by the service provider. CL4 returns only

rejected or successfully processed results. CL5 change transactions also provide a one-for-one response that ensures accurate status reporting.

Provide different CL versions to business partners through AdvanTG Web™

Finally, if you are considering a move to a loan management solution that only supports CL5, rest assured that AdvanTG Web offers you the ability to translate those records into the version required by your business partners. AdvanTG Web also allows for a mixture of CL versions on one loan for different record types. For example, the application can be sent and guaranteed in CL5, and the roster and change transactions can all be CL4. AdvanTG Web will update the loan record appropriately.

If you are interested in the benefits of CL5, or if you would like additional information, contact your TG representative or TG's product support group at (800) 332-1455, or send an e-mail message to product.support@tgslc.org. TG has a full-service team dedicated to customer testing, so that if you are interested in moving to CL5 or any other new process, we can work together to ensure a smooth and seamless transition.

Federal updates

ED releases revised RT4 guidance

ED recently released Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) GEN-04-12, which provides revised guidance on the subject of return of Title IV funds (RT4) specific to the date by which a school that is required to record attendance must determine whether a student has withdrawn. GEN-04-12 replaces GEN-04-03, which was released in February 2004.

The new version of the DCL states that for a school that is required to record attendance by an outside agency other than ED (such as a state, accrediting, or other regulatory agency), the school's date of determination on whether a student withdrew should be no later than 14 days (not one week, as was provided in the previous version of the DCL) after the student's withdrawal date — that is, the last date of academic attendance as determined by the school from its attendance records.

According to verbal guidance from ED's Jeff Baker (see *Shoptalk Online* 246), if, within that (now) 14-day period, the school contacts or is contacted by the student who indicates that he or she will return within the timeframe allowed by the outside agency's rules (that is, within the timeframe at the end of which the outside agency considers the student withdrawn), the school may determine either that the student withdrew or that the student will be returning within the timeframe allowed by the outside agency's rules. If the school determines that the student withdrew, the school must perform the RT4 calculation within 30 days of the date it determined that the student withdrew. If the school determines that the student will be

returning within the timeframe allowed by the outside agency's rules, the school is not required to perform the RT4 calculation unless the student subsequently does not return. The school is strongly encouraged to document its determination in the student's file.

Questions

To access GEN-04-12, go to the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site at www.ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/GEN0412.html. For questions on RT4, contact TG customer assistance at (800) 845-6267 or send an e-mail message to cust.assist@tqslc.org.

Loan community develops inducement guidelines

The student loan community has developed a set of guidelines regarding the illegal use of inducements to obtain FFELP business. The guidelines, which have been circulated throughout the financial aid community over the past several months, have been finalized and endorsed by several major associations that represent organizations participating in the FFELP: the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs (NCHELP), the Consumer Bankers Association (CBA), and the Education Finance Council (EFC).

The guidelines are intended to provide members of the student loan industry with guidance on how to comply with the inducement-related provisions of the Higher Education Act (HEA). The guidelines are available on the NCHELP Web site at www.nchelp.org/news/FFELIndPracGuideNov5.doc.

Trends and issues

TG co-sponsors chat event on loan consolidation

Many borrowers are considering student loan consolidation as interest rates continue to remain at their lowest levels in the history of the FFELP. To help these borrowers weigh the pros and cons of consolidation, *Mapping Your Future* (MYF) is offering a live chat event online at 6 p.m. CST on December 14, 2004.

The chat is designed to help students and parents interested in consolidation make informed decisions. This chat provides a unique opportunity for participants to receive answers to specific loan consolidation and financial aid questions from financial aid and career experts from all over the country. The event is part of MYF's 2004-2005 chat lineup.

Topics

During the loan consolidation chat event, borrowers and their families will learn more about:

- Advantages and disadvantages of loan consolidation

- How to determine if loan consolidation is a good option
- Eligibility requirements
- Steps to apply for loan consolidation
- Other resources of information

Easy access

Joining the MYF chat events in 2004-2005 will remain as easy as ever — Internet access is all that's needed. Interested families and students simply visit mapping-your-future.org just before the chat and follow the chat link on the site.

MYF is a public service Web site sponsored by TG and others in the financial aid industry to provide free college, career, financial aid, and financial literacy services for families, students, and schools.



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To ask questions about *Shoptalk Online*, please contact Communications at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4732 or communications@tgslc.org.

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